

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1-2 (Cancelled)

Claim 3 (Currently amended): A coupling member as claimed in claim [[2]]22 wherein the hook has a terminal portion which is generally transverse to the direction of movement of the closure shaft.

Claim 4 (Original): A coupling member as claimed in claim 3 wherein the terminal portion includes a recess which receives a free end of the closure shaft in its closed position.

Claim 5 (Original): A coupling member as claimed in claim 4 wherein the recess is a blind recess.

Claim 6 (Original): A coupling member as claimed in claim 4 wherein the recess is in the form of a bore which passes through the terminal portion.

Claim 7 (Previously amended): A coupling member as claimed in claim 4 wherein the closure shaft is biased towards its closed position.

Claim 8 (Original): A coupling member as claimed in claim 7 wherein the closure shaft is biased towards its closed position by means of a compression spring.

Claim 9 (Previously amended): A coupling member as claimed in claim 2 wherein the locking pin is biased towards its locked position.

Claims 10-11 (Cancelled)

Claim 12 (Currently amended): A coupling member as claimed in claim [[11]]22 wherein an inner end of the locking pin includes a locking projection which is seated in a locking recess formed in the body portion when the locking pin is in its locked position and wherein the locking projection is clear of said locking recess when the locking pin is in its unlocked position.

Claims 13-17 (Cancelled)

Claim 18 (Currently amended): A coupling member as claimed in claim [[14]]23 wherein the body portion includes first and second side plates which are disposed laterally relative to said first and second moulded body parts.

Claim 19 (Original): A coupling member as claimed in claim 18 wherein the means for fixing the components together include a plurality of rivets which extend between the side plates and clamp the moulded body parts therebetween.

Claim 20 (Previously amended): A coupling member as claimed in claim 18 wherein the moulded body parts are injection moulded from plastics material and the side plates are metallic.

Claim 21 (Cancelled)

Claim 22 (New): A coupling member including:
a body portion formed with a hook;
a closure shaft slidably mounted in a first axial direction in the body for movement between open and closed positions;
a locking member carried by the closure shaft and being movable between locked and unlocked positions, the arrangement being such that when the locking member is in its locked position, it prevents movement of the closure shaft from its closed position, and wherein the locking member includes a locking pin which is slidably mounted in the closure shaft,

the pin having a head and wherein the body portion includes a slot or keyway, the arrangement being such that the locking pin needs to be moved to its unlocked position so that the pin can then move in the slot or keyway when the closure shaft moves;

an actuator which is mounted for sliding movement on the body in a second direction parallel to said first axial direction, the actuator having a recess in which the head of the locking pin is slidably mounted in a third direction which is transverse to said second direction; and

a compression spring which biases the locking pin towards its locked position, the arrangement being such that the user, in use, presses the head inwardly relative to the actuator so that the locking pin moves in said third direction to its unlocked position so that the user can then slide the actuator in said second direction which moves the closure shaft in said first direction from its closed position to its open position.

Claim 23 (New): A coupling member including:

a body portion formed with a hook;

a closure shaft slidably mounted in a first axial direction in the body for movement between open and closed positions;

a locking member carried by the closure shaft and being movable between locked and unlocked positions, the arrangement being such that when the locking member is in its locked position, it prevents movement of the closure shaft from its closed position, and wherein the locking member includes a locking pin which is slidably mounted in the closure shaft, the pin having a head and wherein the body portion includes a slot or keyway, the arrangement being such that the locking pin needs to be moved to its unlocked position so that the pin can then move in the slot or keyway when the closure shaft moves;

an actuator which is mounted for sliding movement on the body in a second direction parallel to said first axial direction, the actuator having a recess in which the head of the locking pin is slidably mounted in a third direction which is transverse to said second direction; and

wherein the body portion includes first and second complementary moulded body parts, wherein the complementary body parts are formed with first projections which cooperate with second projections formed on the actuator to define a key and keyway for constraining the actuator to sliding movement relative to the body portion in said second direction.